

**-SPECIAL EDITION-**

**RIGHT  ON!**

Revolutionary Peoples  
Communication Network

**32**

**POLITICAL PRISONERS**

**MURDERED IN ATTICA**

**PRISON**



BLACK COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE



The bloodiest massacre in the history of Amerikkka's prisons took place at New York's Attica State Prison on Monday, September 13. That day, etched in the memories of black and brown people, saw 1700 state troopers, national guardsmen, and sheriff's deputies wantonly murder at least 32 inmates and 9 hostages.

The mass murder was ordered by Gov. Rockefeller and state corrections commissioner Russell Oswald, and ended a five day takeover by over half of the prison population demanding recognition of their human rights.

More than 1200 brothers had held 38 guards as hostages to negotiate 30 demands presented to Oswald. Close to 50 guards had been seized originally, but several who were injured in the initial action were released by the inmates for treatment. A doctor was permitted to examine the remaining hostages and they were well cared for and in good health.

The toll of those injured in the assault on the prison by the state troopers was estimated at 150 by several sources, with many of the brothers not expected to live. Prison officials at first claimed that the hostages had their throats slashed by the inmates, but an autopsy report than, 24 hours later, proved that to be a lie. The hostages were found to have died from gunshot wounds—rifles, shotguns and pistols, according to Monroe County medical examiner John Edland. The inmates had no guns.

The storming of the "correctional facility" turned out using tear gas, helicopters, rifles and shotguns, was ordered by Oswald barely two hours after he refused to contrivene negotiations and issued an ultimatum, ignoring the pleas of community observers for more time to avert the massacre that followed.

The brothers resisted, armed in defense of their lives with only makeshift weapons, when the four hour battle began at 9:48 AM. Oswald said later that the action was necessary to "restore order," and that the vicious attack was initiated "with extreme reluctance".

Many community organizations have charged Rockefeller with Oswald with mass murder, decrying the haste and viciousness with which the inmates were cut down in answer to their demands that they be treated like human beings. x Rockefeller concurred with Oswald's decision to send in troops after refusing a plea by the committee of observers to come to Attica and meet with them, and refusing to grant amnesty to the inmates for the rebellion.

The committee of observers, some of whom participated in the negotiations between Oswald and the inmates, consisted of prominent people in the community lawyers, and elected officials.

William Kunstler, a well-known movement lawyer and one of those present when the attack began, said, "I am ashamed to be alive in this country today. They are going to commit murder in the name of law and order"

## BEFORE THE BATTLE

The rebellion by the inmates of Attica State Prison which ended in the massacre of at least 41 people by state troopers, began on Thursday, Sept. 9.

Shortly after breakfast on Thursday, the brothers took control of four of the prison's five cellblocks. They were driven back by several hundred state troopers and sheriff's deputies with tear gas until they held only cellblock D and sections of A & B, but they maintained control of those for five days.

They seized almost 50 hostages, but released several who were seriously injured when the rebellion broke out. They continued to hold 38 hostages as they negotiated with corrections commissioner Russell Oswald over demands for treatment as human beings. The demands, which grew from a list of 15 to 30, were as follows:

## DEMANDS

1. Adequate food and shelter for all inmates.
2. Inmates shall be permitted to return to their cells under their own power
3. Complete administrative amnesty to all persons involved in the rebellion.
4. The application of the minimum wage law standards to all work done by the inmates.
5. Establish by Oct. 1, a complete ombudsman service facility staffed by appropriate persons from the neighboring community.
6. Allow all New York State prisoners to be politically active without reprisal.
7. All true religious freedom.
8. End all censorship of newspaper, magazines and other publications from publishers
9. Allow all inmates at their own expense to communicate with anyone they please.
10. Institute realistic effective rehabilitation programs for all inmates.
11. Modernize the inmate education system, including the establishment of a Spanish language library.
12. Provide an effective narcotics treatment program for all inmates requesting such service.
13. Provide and allow adequate legal assistance or permit them to use inmate legal assistance of their choice.
14. Reduce cell time, increase recreation time and provide better recreational facilities and equipment.
15. Provide a healthy diet, reduce number of pork dishes, increase fresh fruit.
16. Provide adequate medical treatment for every inmate
17. Institute a program for the recruitment and employment of a significant number of black and Spanish speaking officers.
18. Establish and inmate grievance commission comprised of one elected inmate from each company which is authorized to speak to the administration about grievances.
19. Investigate the alleged expropriation of inmate funds and the use of profits from the metal and other shops.
20. The State Commissioner of Correctional Facilities will recommend that penal law be changed to cease administrative resentencing of inmates returned for parole violation.
21. Recommend that hearings on the right of prisoners to be represented legally on parole violation charges, be held immediately.
22. Recommend necessary legislation and more adequate funds to expand work relief programs.
23. End approved list for correspondents and visitors.
24. Remove visitation screens as soon as possible.
25. Institute a 30-day maximum for segregation arising out of any one offense. Every effort should be geared to restoring the individual to regular housing as soon as possible.
26. Paroled inmates shall not be charged with parole violations for moving traffic violations or driving without a license unconnected with other crimes.
27. Permit access to outside dentists and doctors at the inmates own expense.
28. It is expressly understood that members of the observer committee will be permitted into the institution on a reasonable basis to determine whether all of the above provisions are effectively carried out.
29. Asylum in a nonimperialistic country for all inmates who want it.
30. The resignation of Rockefeller, Oswald and Mancini.

During the course of the negotiations, many of the brothers who recognized their status as political prisoners, demanded to be released to a non-imperialistic foreign country. Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party, in exile in Algeria, announced that the party would take responsibility for locating a host country, and that the question of political asylum was therefore a negotiable demand.

Thursday night the brothers inside called for a number of people to come to the prison on their behalf, including William Kunstler, a radical movement lawyer; assemblyman Arther Eve of Buffalo, a black politician; representatives of the Young Lords Party, the Black Muslims, the Fortune Society, and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee; Huey Newton of the Black Panther Party and

Federal Judge Constance Baker Motley. Neither Huey Newton or Judge Constance Motley appeared, but on Saturday Bobby Seale arrived. He went briefly to the captured cellblock and left again for California. He said he would return, but on Monday when he arrived in Buffalo, the bloodshed had already begun. Clarence Jones, publisher of the Amsterdam News; Tom Wicker, N. Y. Times columnist; Rep. Herman Badillo, State Senator Robert Garcia, Louis Steele of the Nat'l Lawyers Guild and State Senator John Dunne were among those who joined in the negotiations or became part of the team of observers. In addition to a number of reporters and other community representatives.

State troopers with .270 caliber rifles and sniperscopes were posted on top of prison buildings, while others surrounded the prison with rifles and 12 gauge shotguns.

Helicopters circled the prison, but were grounded after the brothers allegedly threatened to kill the hostages if they were not removed.

Sheriff's deputies, armed with Thompson submachine guns, and AR-15 army rifles (now being used in Vietnam) were sent inside the prison compound, prepared to shoot down the brothers if they were given the word.

One of the brothers read a statement to clarify their position.

"The entire incident that has erupted here at Attica is a result...of the unmitigated oppression wrought by the racist administration network of this prison.

We are men, we are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such...What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed. We will not compromise on any terms except those that are agreeable to us.

We call upon all the conscientious citizens of America to assist us in putting an end to this situation that threatens the life of not only us but of each and every person in the United States as well."

Negotiations continued on Saturday and Sunday and reached an impasse Sunday night over the question of amnesty and the removal of Attica's superintendent Vincent Mancusi.

Oswald finally agreed to the brothers demands to better the conditions in the jail, but called the final two demands "non-negotiable". The brothers hold Mancusi responsible for many of the dehumanizing tactics they suffer daily, since he is in direct administrative control.

The demand for amnesty was conveyed to Rockefeller who said, "I do not have the

STATE



constitutional authority to grant such a demand, and I would not, even if I had the authority, because to do so would undermine the very essence of our free society...."

He refused to go to Attica to meet with the committee of observers after they sent an appeal which read, "The committee of observers at Attica prison is now convinced that a massacre of prisoners and guards may take place in this institution". In addition, the hostages themselves broadcast a plea to Rockefeller to come to the prison, and to grant the amnesty requested by the inmates.

At 7:48 Monday morning, Oswald issued his ultimatum, and at 9:48 the deadly bloodbath began, ending for many the hope that any vestige of humanity remained in any section of the government of a country marching steadily toward fascism.

## AFTERMATH

The smoke of guns and tear gas cleared over Attica to reveal a bloody battlefield strewn with bodies, dead and injured.

There were 28 inmates dead at the first count; that number later climbed to 32. Ten hostages were dead, one having died Saturday afternoon after a fall from a window, the other nine died during the attack on the prison by Rockefeller's storm troopers.

The first newspaper headlines reflected some of the attitudes and resulting treatment of the brothers that led the rebellion. One headline said "I saw seven throats cut", and many of the press accounts depicted the brothers as animals worthy of no more than the slaughter they got.

The prison officials and a state police sergeant described the horror of hostages who had their throats slashed. This was discovered on Tuesday to be a blatant lie. According to the autopsy report released more than 24 hours after the assault, the hostages died of bullet wounds, and everyone agrees that the inmates had no guns.

Rockefeller, Oswald and Mancusi were accused of murder by the community, and several organizations called for their removal.

Around the state, security was tightened at other prisons, for fear the contagion of rebellion would spread. Sing Sing, Dannemora, and Comstock State Prisons had the brothers locked in their cells.

In Baltimore, an attempt at revolt in response to the plight of their Attica brothers was quickly put down by the use of tear gas.

In Illinois, a man was killed in an alleged escape attempt.

Federal Authorities issued warnings to prison officials to take extra precautions against similar rebellions.

Several states, including Massachusetts and Connecticut, put their police departments on alert, citing the possibilities of retaliatory action following the bloody slaughter.

In addition, the FBI called for a nationwide alert, warning the police to be careful in making arrests.

In Palestine, security was tightened on the prisons.

Newspapers the world over condemned the massacre. The Danish Daily Information said, "This time there is no doubt that the responsibility must be placed at the top. By publicly supporting the action against the convicts in Attica State Prison, Nelson Rockefeller and Richard Nixon have declared themselves guilty of first degree murder."

Wednesday night over 100 brothers at Great Meadows Prison at Comstock responded to the Attica massacre with a four hour rebellion. Some 74 brothers from Attica had been transferred there earlier in the day, but were segregated and not alleged to have been involved in the rebellion.

### THE PEOPLE RESPOND

Many people have begun to organize around the tragedy of Attica, determined that our brothers shall not have died to be forgotten.

On Monday night a large number of third world organizations gathered to plan a massive mobilization for Saturday, September 18. By Tuesday night, some 50 organizations had committed themselves to a demonstration of the outrage felt by the Black, Puerto Rican, and Asian community.

On Wednesday, a coalition of groups formed the Ad Hoc Committee to Preserve the Attica Brothers, with Livingston Wingate as Chairman.

A people's funeral is being organized for our dead brothers- for each one of them is part of our family.

The progressive white community has called for a demonstration of solidarity at Union Square on Saturday to coincide with the Harlem Demonstration.

Demonstrations at State prisons across the country are scheduled for October 2.

The people are organizing. But demonstrations, rallies and committees are not enough. Those that ordered the murder at Attica must remember Attica and must be prevented from ever again committing mass murder in the name of the people.

## EDITORIAL

Inside of Attica Prison strong brothers stood guard...arms locked together, black man, Puerto Rican man and white man, the brothers in there all know who their enemy was...the government, the state, the power structure of Amerikkka. Meanwhile out here in minimum security the newspapers screamed about prisoners fighting each other, racist divisions...but all this is totally untrue, a lie manufactured to divide the prisoners and the people.

We have been given this information by brothers that we trust, not the newsmedia, the prison officials or guards, Juan Pi Ortiz, Chief of Staff, Young Lords Party; and Tom Soto, member of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee. They stayed with, rapped to them, supported their demands, and cried with them. Juan and Tom did not go inside to Negotiate, they went because they wanted someone there to support these brothers just demands. They would not try to compromise what the Attica brothers wanted, nor would they try to make them give in on crucial issues. This is also true of Bobby Scale, who refused to be used as a "Negotiator", he refused to go inside to convince the brothers to give in.

But now the Attica brothers can not negotiate anymore. Thirty-two of them are dead, and hundreds are wounded. We must negotiate for them in the streets, we have a responsibility to those brothers, because we have let them down and must now work twice as hard to achieve their demands.

We, the people must criticize ourselves for the deaths of the inmates and hostages at Attica. If we had shown our support before instead of after, if we were organized, if black people spent less time quibbling among each other and more time organizing ourselves to deal with the racist imperialist system we live under...this massacre may not have occurred.

We, the members of the Black Panther Party must criticize ourselves, for not having organized support well enough, or fast enough...for not spending enough time mobilizing our community.

We must criticize the news media for reporting only the government and state position...which later turned out to be blatant lies, like the lies that have been told to us for 400 years by the Amerikkkan government...lies about equal opportunity and freedom for all.

We must give our sympathy and aid to the families of the inmates. We must send our condolences to the families of the hostages, they too were the victims of a fascist attack, a system that exploits prison guards as well as prisoners.

We, as a people, must demand that all 30 of the demands are implemented. We want Rockefeller, Mancusi, and Oswald removed.

We want an international commission composed of people from progressive nations or struggles to be formed to investigate the "concentration camps of America" because we as colonized have the right to foreign aid, since our own "government" only gives us tear gas and bullets.

We call for REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE to avenge the murders of 42 people. We have been attacked and genocidal massacres of our people cannot be tolerated. We must defend ourselves by any means necessary!

AVENGE ATTICA  
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE  
BLACK PANTHER PARTY

## ATTICA DEAD

Samuel Joseph Melville  
Robert Frances (Joseph Hanigan)  
Melvin Ware  
Milton Merryweather III James Robinson  
Charles Lundy  
Rafael Vasquez  
Willie Fuller  
Elliot James Barkley  
Alfred L. Williams  
Thomas Hicks  
Santiago Santos  
Willie West  
William Allen  
Melvin D. Gray  
Barry Jay Schwartz  
Joseph Prescott  
Allan Durham  
John Barnes  
Lorenzo Mc Neil  
Kenneth Hess  
Edward McKinley  
Bernard Davis  
Michael Privitera  
Kenneth Malloy  
Martin Giddell  
Raymond Riviera  
Carl Thomas

POLICE



# REMEMBER SEPT. 13

## PROTEST THE BRUTAL SLAUGHTER OF ATTICA INMATES

BY STATE TROOPERS, NATIONAL GUARD,  
ROCKEFELLER, OSWALD & MANCUSI

# MARCH 1PM

FROM 110th st. & 5th Ave. in MANHATTAN

FROM 138th between BROOK & WILLIS

# RALLY 3PM

AT *125th and 7th ave*

# SAT, SEPT. 18

## SPONSORS

Cooperative College  
El Comite  
Fight Back  
Harlem Committee Against Genocide  
Harlem Committee to Free Angela Davis  
Harlem Communist Party  
Harlem C.O.R.E.  
Harlem Youth Federation  
Health Revolutionary Unity Movement  
I Wor Kuen  
Lumpen Organization  
M.P.I.  
Student National Medical Association

Asian Coalition  
Black Liberation Party  
Black Panther Party  
B.S.U. City College  
B.S.U. Hunter College  
B.S.U. Bklyn College  
B.S.U. N.Y.C.C.C. College  
Black Workers Congress  
Black Workers Council  
Black Social Workers Caucus  
Chickens Come Home to Roost  
Carlos Feliano Defense Committee  
Committee to Defend the Community

National Committee of Black Churchmen  
National Committee for the Defense of  
Political Prisoners  
National Conference of Black Lawyers  
Organization of Black Telephone Workers  
Puerto Rican Student Union  
Prisoner Solidarity Committee  
Republic of New Africa  
S.N.C.C.  
The East  
Third World Women's Alliance  
United Front of Cairo Illinois  
Women's Union  
Young Lords Party